

ABSTRACT

A system and method to identify documents in a database which relate to a given document by using "recursive" searching and no keywords. More particularly, a system and method to identify documents in a database which relate to a "patent under test" by using "recursive" searching and no keywords. The instant invention may be used as an aid in: 1) designing around a "patent under test" by identifying expired patents dealing with subject matter similar to the subject matter dealt with in the "patent under test"; and 2) determining the validity of the "patent under test" by identifying references which deal with the subject matter dealt with by the "patent under test" and which pre-date the patent under test by a sufficient length of time to be applied as prior art under the applicable laws and regulations.

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